DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 699 EA 024 384

AUTHOR Wendel, Frederick C.; Baack, L. Thomas
TITLE The Effect of Assessment upon Developmental Activities.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 19p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Effectiveness; *Assessment Centers (Personnel); *Educational Administration; *Evaluation Utilization; Higher Education; *Leadership Training; *Professional Development; Program Evaluation; Secondary Education; Sex Differences
IDENTIFIERS *NASSP Assessment Center Project

ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that determined the extent to which participants in the Nebraska NASSP Assessment Center Project followed up on the recommendations of assessor teams are presented in this paper. The study compared the developmental pursuits of volunteers with nonvolunteers (program participation was done at request of a school district official or professor) and females with males. A questionnaire sent to 155 school personnel who had participated in a Nebraska assessment center elicited 106 responses, a 68 percent response rate. Findings indicate that one-half of the respondents were in building-level administration and at an entry-level stage in their careers. Individuals who participate in a NASSP Assessment Center complete six exercises--two leaderless groups, two in-baskets, fact-finding, and structural interview--and receive a final report along with oral feedback. All participants reported that the program exercises with the greatest motivating force for pursuing developmental activities were the final written report and the oral feedback. The least motivating were the fact-finding and leaderless group exercises. Females gave equal ratings to the final written report and oral feedback, whereas males rated the written report highest. Attitudes toward four factors relative to assessment did not vary by gender. Overall, the volunteers rated the center's motivational force more highly than did the nonvolunteers. Volunteers with a high degree of personal interest in assessment expressed the most positive attitudes toward the program. Four tables are included. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED352699

The Effect of Assessment upon Developmental Activities

Frederick C. Wendel

Professor of Educational Administration

and

Director of the Nebraska Assessment Center

L. Thomas Baack

Research Associate

Department of Educational Administration

1204 Seaton Hall

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Lincoln, NE 68588-0638

(402) 472-3726

[1992]

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

F.C. Wendel

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 024 384

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Effect of Assessment upon
Developmental Activities

In 1980, the Director of the NASSP Assessment Center Project, Paul W. Hersey, authorized the Nebraska Assessment Center to (a) assess persons enrolled in graduate preparation programs in school administration with data being used to help these students plan individual learning activities for professional development, (b) to assess persons employed as building administrators so that assessment data could be used to plan administrator inservice and development programs, and (c) to assess persons seeking employment as building administrators in school districts when districts contracted with the Nebraska-NASSP Assessment Center for such services. Since the inauguration of the NASSP Assessment Center Project in Nebraska, most of the participants have been graduate students seeking feedback for developmental purposes. Some have participated in an assessment center as early as their first course in graduate school.

Individuals who participate in an NASSP assessment center complete six exercises--two leaderless groups, two in-baskets, fact-finding, and structured interview--and receive a final report, along with oral feedback, that describes their behaviors on each of twelve dimensions. In addition to providing information related to the skill dimensions, assessors in Nebraska have always provided

developmental recommendations for participants. One question that has arisen over the years is "To what extent have participants followed up on the recommendations of assessor teams?"

Design

Purpose

A study was conducted to determine the motivational force of assessment center activities upon participants and to compare developmental pursuits of (a) those who had volunteered for assessment with nonvolunteers and (b) females with males.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was developed to gather information regarding developmental activities from participants in the Nebraska Assessment Center. Participants were asked to provide information concerning (a) position, age, and other demographic variables; (b) their reactions to assessment center activities; and (c) the extent of their pursuits toward developmental recommendations made to them by assessor teams.

Validation. The questionnaire was sent to 10 randomly selected directors affiliated with the NASSP Assessment Center Project for validation; eight were returned. The directors provided suggestions and recommendations which were incorporated into the revised questionnaire.

Sample. The questionnaire was sent to 155 school personnel who had participated in an assessment center in Nebraska. As much as seven years to a little over a year had lapsed since the subjects participated in an assessment center. Two or more years had lapsed since assessment for 89.6% of the respondents. Of the 155 which were mailed, 106 (68.4%) were returned after two mailings.

In Part I of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had been requested to participate in an assessment center. Respondents who were requested to do so by school district officials or by college or university professors were considered to have participated on a nonvoluntary basis (26.4%). Other respondents (73.6%) were considered to have participated on a voluntary basis.

Data Analysis

Demographic Data

Position held. Half (50%) of the total were building level administrators. Of the volunteers, nearly half (48.8%) were building level administrators while 53.5% of the nonvolunteers held such positions. The others were teachers, central office personnel, guidance counselors, or in other positions. Almost a third (32.4%) of the females and over half (59.1%) of the males were in building level administration. While one-sixth (16.2%) of the females were in

central office positions, 18.2% of the males were in similar ones. Over half (51.4%) of the females were in "Other" positions, as teacher, while 22.7% of the males held "Other" positions.

Gender. Females comprised 35.9% of the total group, 38.7% of the volunteers, and 28.67% of the nonvolunteers. Three respondents (2.8%) did not indicate gender.

Age. One-half (50.0%) of the total was between 30 and 39 years of age; 50.7% of the volunteers and 53.6% of the nonvolunteers were in this age range. By gender, 35.1% of the females and 59.1% of the males were between 30 and 39. About one-fourth (27.9%) of the total was from 40 to 49 years of age (volunteers--27.6% and nonvolunteers--28.6%). Nearly one in seven (15.4%) was between 50 and 59 and one in twenty (4.8%) was younger than 29. The females were older as 41.5% of them were between 40 and 49 while 19.7% of the males were in this age range. Also, a larger percentage of females (18.9%) than males (12.1%) were in the 50 to 59 age range. No response was received for this item from 2.8% of those who returned a questionnaire.

Promotions. At the time of the study, 53.8% of the total reported they had been promoted. Of the volunteers, 55.1% reported they had been promoted, and 50.0% of the nonvolunteers had received promotions. A smaller percentage of females (32.4%) reported being

promoted than males (52.1%). Only one in sixteen (6.6%) did not indicate whether or not they had been promoted since assessment.

Lateral transfers. About one in five (20.8%) responding to this item reported that they had made a lateral transfer since assessment. Of the volunteers, 19.2% had made a lateral transfer, and 25.0% of the nonvolunteers had done so. A larger percentage of females (24.3%) had made a lateral transfer then males (18.2%). One in nine (11.3%) did not respond to this item.

Changed employers. Over two of five (43.4%) had changed employers since assessment. Of the volunteers, 42.3% had changed employers as had 46.4% of the nonvolunteers. Females changed employers (35.1%) less frequently than did the males (45.5%). Six (5.7%) did not respond to this item.

Demotions. No participant reported having been demoted since assessment while one in seven (14.2%) gave no response to the item.

Left education. Few (4.7%) of the total had found employment outside education. A smaller percentage of the volunteers (2.6%) than of the the nonvolunteers (10.7%) had found employment outside of education since participation in an assessment center. About the same percentage of females (5.4%) and males (4.5%) had left education. Sixteen subjects (15.1%) did not respond to this item.

Motivating Force of Center Features

The respondents were asked to rate six features of assessment centers relative to their motivating force for development. The six features were the leaderless group, fact-finding, in-basket, interview, final written report and oral feedback. On a five-point scale (Strongly Agree = 5 to Strongly Disagree = 1), the respondents noted their agreement to statements such as, "Participation in the [leaderless group] exercise motivated me to pursue developmental activities."

Reading the final written report was indicated to have the greatest motivating force for the pursuit of developmental activities (M = 3.64). The exercise with the second highest mean was "Receiving oral feedback" (3.60). Next, in order, were the structured interview (3.30), in-basket (3.27), fact-finding (3.16), and leaderless group (2.97).

Insert Table 1 about here

Volunteers/Nonvolunteers. For the volunteers, the highest mean was for "Reading the final written report" (3.86). Next, "Receiving oral feedback" had a mean of 3.74, followed by the structured interview (3.41), in-basket (3.40), the fact-finding exercise (3.28), and last, the leaderless group (3.08).

The nonvolunteers viewed the exercises as motivators to pursue developmental activities in this order: oral feedback--3.21; the final written report--3.04; interview--3.00; in-basket--2.93; fact finding--2.82; and leaderless group--2.68.

The volunteers gave positive ratings to each of the exercises as a motivating force for development. While rankings of the mean scores for the final written report, oral feedback, in-basket, and interview varied for the volunteers and nonvolunteers, both gave lowest rating to the fact-finding and leaderless group exercises as motivating forces for pursuing developmental activities.

Females/Males. Females gave equal ratings (3.62) to reading the final written report and oral feedback as motivating forces. Next were interview (3.49), in-basket (3.38), fact-finding (3.08), and leaderless group (2.97). The males rated "Reading the final written report" highest (3.67), followed by oral feedback (3.59), both in-basket and fact-finding at 3.20, interview (3.17), and leaderless group (2.92).

The respondents were asked to indicate their attitudes toward four factors relative to assessment: (a) personal interest in assessment, (b) satisfaction with performance, (c) accuracy of assessors' ratings, and (d) congruency of assessors' ratings with self-estimates of skills. The respondents noted their agreement to those statements on a five-point scale (Strongly Agree = 5 to Strongly Disagree = 1).

The highest mean was derived in response to "My participation in the assessment center was based on personal interest" (4.15). "I was pleased with my performance in the assessment center," had a mean of 3.54. "The ratings of my performance in the assessment center generally were accurate," (3.42) and "The assessment team's appraisals of my performance generally were consistent with my own estimates of skills in the areas assessed," (3.11) comprised the remaining factors.

Insert Table 2 about here

Volunteers/Nonvolunteers. The respondents classified as volunteers were most in agreement with "My participation in the assessment center was based on personal interest," (4.45). The mean for "I was pleased with my performance in the assessment center," (3.64) was second, followed by perceived congruency of assessors' ratings with self-estimates of skills (3.50), and perceived accuracy of assessors' ratings (3.49).

The nonvolunteers had lower mean scores for all factors: (a) participation based on personal interest (3.32); (b) satisfaction with performance (3.25); (c) perceived accuracy of assessors' ratings

(3.25); and (d) perceived congruency of assessors' ratings with self-estimates of skills (2.75).

The order of the mean scores for volunteers and nonvolunteers differed with regard to the last two factors.

Females/Males. the females' highest mean (4.16) was for "Participation based on personal interest." That was followed by "Satisfaction with performance"--3.68; "Accuracy of assessors' ratings"--3.51; and "Congruency of assessors' ratings with self-appraisals"--3.24. The order was the same for males: Personal interest--4.12; Satisfaction--3.46; Accuracy of assessors' ratings--3.38; and Congruency of assessors' ratings with self-appriasals--3.03.

Participation in Developmental Programs

The respondents were asked to provide specific information regarding actions taken, if any, toward developmental recommendations contained in the final written report. Developmental programs identified by the voluntary and nonvoluntary participants were tabulated. The volunteers had a mean score of 3.88 developmental activities engaged in after assessment while the nonvolunteers pursued on average of 2.64 developmental recommendations. A t-test conducted between the two means indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between

the volunteers and nonvolunteers relating to their pursuits of developmental recommendations (T value of 1.38 with $p > .05$).

Insert Table 3 about here

Developmental programs identified by female and male participants were also tabulated. Females participated in a mean of 3.79 activities since assessment while males engaged in a mean of 3.33 developmental activities. A t-test conducted between the two means indicated there was no statistically significant difference between the means of the females and males (T value of -.56 with $p > .05$).

Insert Table 4 about here

Summary

Half of the participants in the Nebraska Assessment Center were in building level administration and at an entry-level stage in their careers, i.e., 39 or younger and beginning graduate programs. About one of three respondents was a female.

Over half the respondents had received a promotion since assessment; one-fifth had taken a lateral transfer; about two of five had

changed employers; one in twenty-five had found employment outside of education; and none reported a demotion.

Based upon the mean scores of the respondents, the exercise with the greatest motivating force for pursuing developmental activities was the final written report which contains detailed analyses of performance on each of the twelve dimensions plus developmental recommendations. Oral feedback, given by the director of a center, that is based upon the final written report, including explanations, clarifications, and discussions, had the second highest mean score. Oral feedback was followed by interview, in-basket, fact-finding, and last, the leaderless group.

For the nonvolunters, three of the exercises--in-basket, fact-finding, and leaderless group--were not perceived as motivating forces toward pursuing developmental activities.

As indicated by mean scores, the participants had a relatively high degree of personal interest in assessment but were somewhat less satisfied with their performance. Lower mean scores were derived for two other factors: accuracy and congruency of assessor's ratings. Participants perceived accuracy of assessors' ratings to be higher than congruency of assessors' ratings with self-estimates of skill.

Overall, the ratings of motivational force of assessment center activities of the volunteers were higher than those of the

nonvolunteers. Except for participation in fact-finding, the means of the females were higher than those of the males.

The volunteers reportedly pursued about one more developmental activity than the nonvolunteers; nevertheless, the difference was not statistically significant. Likewise, females reported, on the average, greater participation in developmental activities than males although no statistical significance was found.

In conclusion, the written and oral feedback features reportedly had the most impact upon developmental activities while the fact-finding and leaderless group were the exercises with the lowest influence upon the pursuit of developmental activities. Participants had personal interest in assessment but were not as pleased with their performance. Assessors' ratings were perceived to be more accurate than congruent with participants' self-estimates of their skills. Nonvolunteers saw the least congruence of assessors' ratings with self-estimates of skills. Participants had pursued nearly four developmental activities since assessment.

Participants who had a high degree of personal interest in assessment and who volunteered for assessment had the most positive attitudes toward the assessment center program. Because leadership is such an essential element for successful principals, the motivating

force of leaderless groups, in particular, for pursuing developmental activities could be a subject for future study.

Table 1

Ratings of Motivational Force of Assessment Center Activities by Volunteers, Nonvolunteers, Females, Males, and Totals

Assessment Center Activity	Vols	Non Vols	Females	Males	Total
Participation in leaderless group	3.08	2.68	2.97	2.92	2.97
Participation in factfinding	3.28	2.82	3.08	3.20	3.16
Participation in in-basket	3.40	2.93	3.38	3.20	3.27
Participation in interview	3.41	3.00	3.49	3.17	3.30
Reading final written report	3.86	3.04	3.62	3.67	3.64
Receiving oral feedback	3.74	3.21	3.62	3.59	3.60

Table 2

Attitudes Toward Participation in Assessment Center Program by Volunteers, Nonvolunteers, Females, Males, and Total

Assessment Center Activity	Vols	Non Vols	Females	Males	Total
Participation based on personal interest	4.45	3.32	4.16	4.12	4.15
Satisfaction with performance	3.64	3.25	3.68	3.46	3.54
Accuracy of assessors' ratings	3.49	3.25	3.51	3.38	3.42
Congruency of assessors' ratings with self-appraisal	3.50	2.75	3.24	3.03	3.11

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations and t Test for Number of Developmental Activities Attempted by Voluntary and Nonvoluntary Participants

	Volunteers	Nonvolunteers	t
Mean	3.88	2.64	1.38
Standard Deviation	4.18	3.65	

df = 102, p > .05

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations and t Test for Number of Developmental Activities Attempted by Females and Males

	Females	Males	t
Mean	3.79	3.33	-.56
Standard Deviation	4.61	3.74	

df = 103, p .05